

Bullying: a phenomenon on the rise



READING

13a Before you read, check the meanings of these words with your teacher.

► hitting ► kicking ► name calling ► racial slurs ► gossip

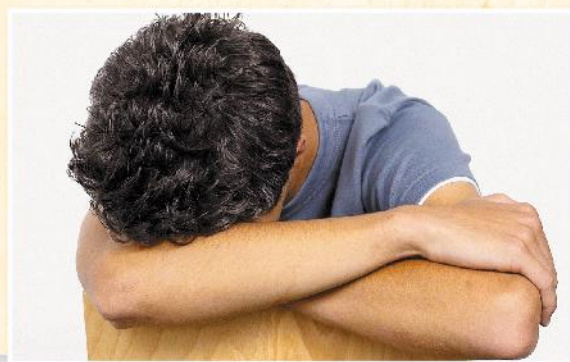
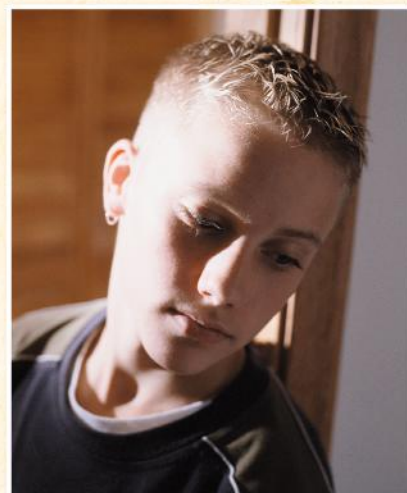
13b **ES** Answer the questions.

ALL TOGETHER TO STOP BULLYING

For two years, Johnny, a quiet British 12-year-old, was a human plaything for some of his schoolmates. The teenagers asked Johnny for money and they hit him in the toilet. When the police interrogated Johnny's torturers about bullying, they said that it was just fun. Today, bullying is a serious problem. 1 in 3 British primary and secondary school students say they don't feel safe at school. But, what is bullying? Bullying can mean a lot of things. Students have described bullying in different ways, because it can take different forms:

- physical bullying includes hitting, pushing, kicking and other types of physical harm, as well as destruction of personal possessions;
- verbal bullying includes teasing, name calling, racial slurs, gossip or rumours;
- cyberbullying includes sending nasty e-mails or instant messages and threatening through web-sites or blogs.

Children who are victims of bullying may be afraid of going to school: they usually complain of headaches or stomach-aches and have trouble concentrating on schoolwork. In the long term, they may suffer from depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. As teenagers often try to keep it a secret, parents should take bullying seriously and they should look for signs: missing money or mobile phones, cuts or abrasions, torn or dirtied clothing, no appetite, sadness... Most schools have an anti-bullying policy. Parents should make an appointment to see the head teacher and talk about what's happening to their children in order to find a positive solution to the problem.



1. How was Johnny a victim of bullies?
2. Why were the bullies so violent to Johnny?
3. Is bullying a phenomenon only in secondary schools?
4. What forms does bullying take?
5. Why shouldn't teenagers give their mobile phone number or their e-mail address to everyone?
6. What consequences can bullying have on students' schoolwork?
7. What are the most severe consequences teenagers can have?
8. Is it easy for young people to talk to someone about what's happening to them?
9. What are the main signs showing that children are victims of bullying?
10. What do most schools have in order to combat bullying?

on the rise = in crescita
 plaything = giocattolo
 harm = danno
 as well as = così come
 threat = minacciare
 self-esteem = autostima
 torn = strappati
 policy = politica



LISTENING

14 **1.31** **K** Listen to Kevin, a boy who is a victim of bullies: they tease him and ask him for his mobile, iPod and digital camera. He is talking with a member of a social organization to help teenagers in difficulty. Choose the correct answer (a, b or c).

- The gang of bullies meets Kevin
 - ☐ a. at school.
 - ☐ b. in the gym.
 - ☐ c. at the park.
- Kevin thinks that if he does what they want
 - ☐ a. they will accept him in their gang.
 - ☐ b. they will stop bullying him.
 - ☐ c. they will abandon school.
- Kevin thinks the best way to protect himself is
 - ☐ a. to stop going to school.
 - ☐ b. to fight back and to oppose them.
 - ☐ c. to become a bully himself.
- The expert suggests that Kevin
 - ☐ a. should stop bullying by himself.
 - ☐ b. should keep his situation secret.
 - ☐ c. should talk to one of his teachers.
- According to the expert, when Kevin doesn't feel safe
 - ☐ a. he should stay with a group of mates.
 - ☐ b. he should run home.
 - ☐ c. he should hide somewhere.
- Bullying always causes
 - ☐ a. fun.
 - ☐ b. satisfaction.
 - ☐ c. misery.



READING AND SPOKEN INTERACTION

15 **K** Read the following sentences, then work with a classmate and say which comments you agree with and which you disagree with, giving your reason.

- Schools should expel students who are violent to other students; it's good for teenagers to see that there's a limit.
- Teenagers who are victims of bullying find it difficult to talk about it with someone.
- The victims of bullying are often teenagers who are brilliant at school or who come from very rich families or who are unpopular with everyone.
- The victims of bullying can become bullies themselves.
- Bullies are useful because teachers concentrate on them and they don't give lessons or homework.
- Bullies learn how to act violently from TV and the Internet.
- Every school should have an anti-bullying policy.



WRITING

16 Write a short paragraph in which you describe an unpleasant episode of bullying which happened to you or to one of your friends. Follow the prompts below.

- Who the victim of a bully was.
- Who the bully was.
- When and where it happened.
- What the bully did.
- How the victim felt.
- How long it lasted.
- Who the victim told about it.
- How it finished.

17 Work in groups of four. Make an anti-bullying charter for your school. Write what your school, the students and the victims should do to prevent and stop bullying.

Example: 1. There should be a class committee.
This committee should decide what to do about the situation.